

AUG 08 2006

Appl. No. 10/789,971
Amdt. Dated 8-8-06
Reply to Office Action of 4-20-06**Amendments to the Claims**

The current listing of claims replaces all previous versions of the claims.

Listing of Claims

Please cancel claims 1 – 11.

12. (currently amended) A support assembly for receiving and maintaining one or more sections of an above-ground structure at a substantially upright position, said support assembly comprising:

a base member having an annular shape with a predetermined diameter and further having a substantially planar top surface, said base member being ~~positionable~~ positioned below a ground surface with said top surface disposed at a substantially horizontal position, said base member including a centrally registered protrusion connected to said top surface and extending upwardly therefrom in a substantially vertical direction, said protrusion having a centrally registered bottom face directly coupled to said top surface of said base member, said protrusion further having an annular top face provided with a diameter smaller than a diameter of said bottom face respectively;

a plurality of ancillary members having a plurality of selectively engageable top and bottom end portions defining engaging and receiving portions respectively so that a height of said assembly can be adjusted as desired by a user, one said plurality of ancillary members being ~~positionable~~ directly positioned onto said base member and for receiving another said plurality of ancillary members thereon, said plurality of engaging and receiving portions having corresponding conical shapes respectively, said engaging portions extending upwardly from a top surface of each of said ancillary members and being centrally registered with respective central longitudinal axes thereof, said receiving portions extending upwardly from a bottom surface of each of said ancillary members and being centrally registered with the central longitudinal axes thereof respectively, said receiving portions terminating subjacent to said engaging portions

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such that a major central region of each of said ancillary members defines a solid core formed from a rigid substance; and

a top member selectively engageable with said plurality of ancillary members and being spaced from said base member, said top member including a top end portion having a slot formed therein and for receiving a section of an above-ground structure so that same can be maintained at a secure position;

wherein said top member has an outer surface and a centrally disposed longitudinal axis, said slot having a substantially square first portion positioned about the axis and further having a substantially rectangular portion integral with the first portion and extending outwardly therefrom towards said outer surface of said top member to thereby allow fluids to drain away from said slot, wherein said square first portion and said rectangular portion have respective longitudinal lengths greater than respective widths thereof such that the above-ground structure is effectively maintained at a substantially stable position and prohibited from disengaging said top member during inclement weather conditions.

13. (original) A support assembly of claim 12, wherein said protrusion has a conical shape for engaging said receiving portion of said one ancillary member.

14. (canceled)

15. (original) A support assembly of claim 12, wherein said base and top members and said plurality of ancillary members are formed from concrete.